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with Hydrocephalus
and
Hydrothorax. An Inquiry

into the
Symptoms cause and seat
of
Diabetes.

By
Robert Briggs, Virginia

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An Inquiry into the symptoms &c of Diabetes.

This is a disease in its commencement but seldom noticed by the patient labouring under it, and of course rarely falling under the observation of the medical practitioner until it has reached a more advanced stage.

The symptoms which point out its existence are a craving appetite, insatiable thirst, dry mouth, accompanied with a bitter or mawkish taste, swollen gums, teeth as if on edge from acids, loose in their sockets, whitish tongue with red edges increased quantities of urine, which generally has a sweetish taste, and resembling in appearance a solution of honey in water, with a slight greenish tinge, extreme wasting of the flesh in a majority of cases considered but in some instances an obstinate hardness of the bowels; dry skin most frequently hot occasionally having a cold clay-like feel, flushed of the face, head ach, an intermission of the usual appetite, soreness and a slight degree of swelling about the glands present in males; an uneasiness at the termination of the urethra in females; a sensation of weight at the seat of the stomach, and a pain in the region of the kidneys. slight stomatitis, generally confined to the night.

The seat and proximate cause of this disease have been matter of anxious inquiry and diligent search among Physicians in every age of medical science, from the time of Hippocrates to the present day; to enumerate the various hypotheses which has been formed by the several authors who have written on the subject would form a catalogue affording neither instruction nor amusement equal in value

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to the time which must necessarily be expended in its compilation.

The Author of this essay, after examining the several opinions which have fallen within his reach, has been led irresistibly to adopt the sentiments of Professor Park: i.e., that diabetes has its origin in a disease ~~of the~~ ^{of the} liver, with a view to the establishment of this doctrine the following sheets are devoted.

The late celebrated Doctor Cullen² considered this disease as arising from "some fault in the assimilating powers or in those employed in converting alimentary matter into the proper animal fluids"³; among the abettors of this opinion we may also place Doctor Home². This view of the subject however was only hinted at in a distant manner, until Doctor Rollos³ ushered it into the world, reduced to a more definite form, but the greater number of his reasons for believing diabetes a disease of the stomach will support, with more energy, the opinion of its being a disease of the liver. It has long been known, that in diseases of the liver alkaline substances were serviceable; we find jaundice frequently cured by soda, either alone or combined with soap: the several preparations of iron have

Muller's first lines § 15.19

² Clinical Experiments page 313 May

³ Rollos on diabetes page 436 - 2nd edit

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have also been used for the same purpose. Opium when the
vessels of the liver act languidly produce great benefit in
stimulating them to a more vigorous and healthy action.

Doctor Pollo acknowledges a deficiency of bile evinced
by light coloured stools & as noticed by Doctor Aspinwall⁵.

Doct Bullen, altho' advocating a different opinion, states facts
going far to prove the doctrine here defended to be correct:
it frequently (says he) happens to men who for a long time before
had been intemperate in drinking, that it happens to persons
of a broken constitution or who are weak & frequently expost it are
in a cachectic state, that it follows intermittent fevers,
intemperance in the use of spirituous liquors very generally pro-
duce disease action in the liver that a great number of the
forms of disease included by Doct Bullen in his class botche-
ria arise from disease of the liver is a fact I believe not to
be denied and that a diseased liver succeeds intermitents more
frequently than any other form of disease (an enlargement
of the spleen perhaps excepted) is equally certain. Doct Horner⁶
suspects some connection of (what he conceives) the diseased
organ with the liver in Mr Brundops case Doct Elmid⁷
considers diabetes as liable to jaundice and affirms that
stool

⁴ Lomonosov Vol 2 Page 665

Sotomireus Vol 7. p. 87

⁵ Plutarch mid museum Vol 5 p 139

⁷ Treatise on Poisons Chap 8

⁶ Lomonosov Vol 2 p 141

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strictureous tumours are found in the liver as to the soundness
of the fixture this is dubious & this Opinion of Dr. Mead is
taken notice of by Professor Rush. It is asserted that the liver
is frequently found in a sound state contrary to the observation
of Doctor Mead this has arisen no doubt in many in-
stances from want of attention for we find in the cases
of dispepsia reported by Dr. Duncan ^{and} and Doctor Marshall
that altho' the liver is stated to have been sound in the
same report they inform us that the contents of the gall
bladder differed from healthy bile. Professor Rush has more-
over proven to us that the liver may be greatly diseased
and still exhibit no mortific marks under the knife.

Mr. William Scott, Surgeon in the service of the East
India company, cured both the patients which came under his
observation under diabetes with mercury after many other re-
medies had been tried in vain ^{one} of these relapsed who was
afterwards restored to health by the use of the nitric Acid.
The good effects of Nitric Acid in diseases of the liver are too well
known to require any comment. - Doct^r Pottingill's pa-
tient recovered by the use of a prescription of which mercury

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8 Acid. Mer. Vol 7 page 87	11 Phthac Mer. Mus. 7 " 87
9 Pees Cyclopædia Diabetes	12 N. Y. Med. Rep. 1 " 137
10 Phthac Mer. Mus. 2, 219-229 -	13 Acid. Liver August 2 -

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Some ⁱⁿ fact - the number of instances stated by Mr. Rollo & Mr. Wall in their cases & show the insufficiency of Dr. Rollo's plan and at the same time almost demonstrate these principles to be just by the signal success attending the cure of the patient under the most unfavourable circumstances. Doctor Rush has succeeded in four cases out of five by the last mentioned mode of treatment. the case related by Professor Bartow, in his lectures, of a Gentleman one of the officers of the bank, having been cured by confinement to vegetable diet, gives a death blow to the theory of Doctor Rollo, and effects much in establishing the Rushian doctrine.

Two instances of this disease have fallen under my own observation these cases occurred several years ago, at a time when Doctor Rush's theory of this disease had not fallen into my hands. they were treated agreeably to Dr. Rollo's plan, both of them were very greatly ameliorated during the continuance of the animal diet, &c. but the disease returned in a few months after resuming their former mode of life, a habit of which consisted in the liberal intemperance of spirituous liquors. one of these cases has terminated fatally, the subject of the other, wearing gradually out at the last infirmation. I have no hesitation in believing that both these men laboured under disease of the liver: they had long been in the habit of boozing in lowly dens, before the throne of Bacchus, and one of them

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bore along the record of his practice in the florid gutterosa
of his face... in one of these patients, a symptom existed which
as far, as I have been able to learn is not generally atten-
dant on this disease; a wasting and obstinate diarrhoea
this evidently arose from the same cause which produced
the increased discharge of urine. a return of the diarrhoea
was invariably preceded by an increased flow of urine and
in proportion as the urinary discharge was augmented
the disease of the bowels became aggravated. in this case
so certainly did a variety of circumstances point to a dis-
eased liver, that had I not been too much tie down by
a particular theory, and fearing it might militate against
the hitherto only known method of alleviation I should un-
questionably have attempted the removal of this disease
by the use of mercury, together with the accompanying
remedies used for the cure of chronic hepatitis.

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